

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01

NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 MC-02 AID-20 EB-11 IGA-02 DRC-01

EUR-25 ACDA-19 L-03 TRSE-00 /147 W

----- 002871

R 080825Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6486

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 4946

SECDEF FOR DC/DSAA/ISA

USCINCEUR FOR J4/7

CNO FOR OP-63

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, TS

SUBJECT: EVIDENT TUNISIAN INTEREST IN PURCHASING A4M

AIRCRAFT

1. TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO MOVE IN DIRECTION OF PURCHASING A4M AIRCRAFT. WEEK AGO MINDEF SECSTATE BENNOUR TOLD ME, IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, THAT "DECISION" ON AIRCRAFT COULD BE EXPECTED WITHIN FEW DAYS. BENNOUR CALLED CHUSLOT, COLONEL THOMAS, TO HIS OFFICE AUGUST 6 TO EXPRESS TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN PURCHASE OF A4M AIRCRAFT.

2. BENNOUR SAID THAT LETTER OF INTEREST TO PURCHASE THESE AIRCRAFT, INCLUDING REQUEST FOR LETTER OF OFFER, WILL BE FORWARDED TO EMBASSY SHORTLY. BENNOUR DID NOT RPT NOT SPECIFY NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT GOT HAD IN MIND, BUT AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF WHO PRESENT AT MEETING, EXPRESSED VIEW THAT TWELVE AIRCRAFT IS MINIMUM NUMBER REQUIRED.

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3. BENNOUR ALSO REQUESTED UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON FINANCING POSSIBILITIES.

4. COMMENT: CHUSLOT'S PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH TUNISIAN MILITARY OFFICIALS LEADS HIM TO BELIEVE THAT GOT IS CONSIDERING PURCHASE OF TEN A4M AND TWO TA4F AIRCRAFT FOR DELIVERY FIRST QUARTER FY 77. UPON RECEIPT OF LETTER OF INTEREST, WE WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TUNISIANS HAVE IN MIND. WHILE GOT APPEARS TO HAVE MADE TENTATIVE DECISION TO PROCEED IN DIRECTION OF PURCHASE OF U.S. AIRCRAFT, BENNOUR'S REQUEST FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON FINANCING POSSIBILITIES SUGGESTS OUTSIDE POSSIBILITY THAT OUR LIMITED CAPABILITIES IN THIS REGARD COULD TRIGGER GOT DECISION SOMEWHERE DOWN THE LINE TO BUY FRENCH MIRAGE 5 AIRCRAFT INSTEAD. WE ASSUME GOF WOULD BE PREPARED OFFER MORE FAVORABLE FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS THAN WE ARE. WHILE

BENNOUR KNOWS THAT HE HAS \$2.5M IN FMS CREDIT IN FISCAL 1974 WHICH COULD BE APPLIED TO THIS PURCHASE, HE REALIZES GOT CANNOT DEFINITELY COUNT ON FUTURE INCREMENTS OF FMS. ALSO, WHILE HE MAY HAVE LEARNED OF POSSIBILITY OF COMMERCIAL FINANCING THROUGH MCDONNELL DOUGLAS, RATES ARE HIGH. ON OTHER HAND, IT POSSIBLE THAT GOT HAS DECIDED TO EARMARK ITS OWN FUNDS TOWARD PURCHASE THESE AIRCRAFT AND THAT AVAILABILITY OF OUTSIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL NOT BE DETERMINING FACTOR.
SEELYE

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Message Attributes

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